



February 21, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Meet my daughter, Sierra Skora-Thomas. A beautiful, kind, loving, fun, and hard working young woman who also happens to live with the double whammy of I/DD and Autism – but that hasn't slowed her down! This past Spring, she was awarded the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement at her school, The Gengras Center – the result of working incredibly hard. She is now in the educational transition program at Chapel Haven and again working hard to achieve her dreams of living independently and working with children.

If you restore funding for day and employment services for new graduates her dreams could be achieved. Without the funding it would not be possible. While Sierra is very capable, she is also extremely vulnerable. She can be easily overwhelmed by noise and unpredictable routines. She thinks everyone is her friend and is at risk from being abused physically and psychologically. The Governor's proposal to invest \$3.8 million in the ID Partnership could help set in place protections and community based supports for her that would enable her to go out into the world and make her contribution to society – something she desperately wants to do.

Please restore funding and support the Governor's proposal!

Thank you for all your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Delia Thomas

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